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ABSTRACT

Based on studies of student attrition at Mid-Florida Technical Institute (MFTI) and Valencia Community College (VCC), this handbook presents an action plan model for the identification of reasons students fail to complete postsecondary vocational programs. Introductory material reviews the purpose of the handbook (i.e., to assist program administrators at school, local, and district levels in dealing with vocational student attrition), the need addressed by the MFTI and VCC studies (i.e., a 63% dropout rate in postsecondary vocational programs in Orange County), and the process used in the development of the handbook. Next, the steps involved in the action plan model are outlined, including selection of personnel to work on the project, discussion of the problem, appointment of a project facilitator, development of plans, collection of background information, preparation of the survey instrument, determination of study methodology, identification of the population to be surveyed, scheduling of interviews, selection and training of interviewers, conduct of the survey, analysis of the data, preparation and distribution of the study report, and remediation of program deficiencies. The bulk of the handbook consists of appendices which list materials used in the study and contributing institutions, contain the survey instrument, and provide MFTI and VCC student follow-up survey results and suggested actions for reducing attrition at these schools. (HB)

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REDUCING POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL STUDENT ATTRITION

A HANDBOOK INCLUDING AN ACTION PLAN MODEL

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State of Florida
Department of Education
Ralph D. Turlington, Commissioner of Education
Tallahassee, Florida
Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

Division of Vocational Education

January, 1981

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PREFACE

The need to identify reasons for high student attrition rates in postsecondary vocational programs was recognized by staff members of the Orange County Public Schools and Valencia Community College. Out of a concern about the large number of post-secondary vocational program enrollees in Orange County who failed to complete their programs of study grew plans to take constructive measures. A proposal to study student attrition at two Orange County institutions—Mid-Florida Technical Institute and Valencia Community College—was funded by the Division of Vocational Education of the Florida Department of Education. The study resulted in development of this action plan model, conducting of the follow-up survey of dropouts, and preparation of this Handbook.

This Handbook presents the action plan model used in Orange County to identify reasons why students fail to complete post-secondary vocational programs. Although the model includes procedures that were developed and utilized for this project, it was designed to be applicable as a general guide for personnel at educational institutions, school districts, and other agencies. A major objective of this Handbook is to provide the kind of assistance and information that will enable users to find the causes of student attrition and to take actions to reduce this dropout rate, while keeping the expenditure of time and other resources to a minimum. Administrators are encouraged to survey the causes of their students' failure to complete postsecondary vocational programs and to use the information to take remedial action so that program completion rates can be improved.

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Handbook is to assist school, district, and community college administrators, teachers, counselors, and others to deal effectively with postsecondary vocational program student attrition. The Handbook presents an action plan model to determine why students fail to complete postsecondary programs or courses and to aid decision makers in the development of strategies for reducing student dropout rates. Use of the Handbook will enable educators to conduct their own studies of program noncompleters.

NEED

Evidence indicates there is widespread concern about postsecondary vocational program student dropout rates. While many possible reasons for the high rate of attrition have been advanced, little documentation to support the various contentions is available. In Orange County, Florida, in 1978, an overall student dropout rate of 63 percent in postsecondary vocational programs heightened concern among those involved with the programs. The need for data and techniques to deal with the dropout problem was perceived to be of critical importance. In view of this, concerned Orange County educators devoted considerable time and effort developing a plan to deal with the dropout problem. A survey of program noncompleters was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

To identify reasons why students leave postsecondary programs before completion

To identify weaknesses in existing programs and services within postsecondary institutions

To determine whether economic conditions affect the dropout rate.

PROCESS

Staff members thought that the most reliable information on why students drop out might best be provided by the dropouts themselves. Since no adequate guide for obtaining this information was available, the study group developed a set of procedures to meet the established objectives. These procedures were refined, field tested, and organized into this Handbook so that the valuable experiences gained in Orange County might serve as a guide for other decision makers who wish to identify reasons for student attrition in their own postsecondary vocational programs.

This Handbook offers an outline of investigative steps and a field-tested survey instrument, and presents the survey results from Orange County. The Handbook is designed to be used by occupational education program administrators or guidance/placement directors and staff members at the school, local, or district levels who wish to conduct their own studies.

The survey instrument can be modified to meet the individualized needs of users. For example, particular student dropout populations can be targeted by course or study area, or particular questionnaire items such as those relating to instructional effectiveness can be emphasized and expanded.

Students in postsecondary vocational programs will be the ultimate beneficiaries of efforts to reduce student attrition. Information from these studies can be analyzed and used by educators to improve instruction and services.

ACTION PLAN MODEL

Presented in the following outline is an action plan model for identifying reasons for student attrition in postsecondary vocational programs. Although the plan enumerates procedures that were developed and utilized in Orange County, Florida, the model is designed to be applicable as a general guide for other institutions and districts. It is expected that many users of the model will be able to adopt the survey and adapt the action plan to their particular situation. The survey instrument itself also may be modified or expanded to meet the demands and needs of users.

SELECT GROUP

Select appropriate administrators, occupational placement specialists and/or other designated and interested persons. The membership of the problem-solving group will vary, depending on goals and needs. (Except where specified, activities were conducted by this group.)

DISCUSS PROBLEM

Discuss the dropout problem at a meeting of the problem-solving group.

Consider approaches to investigating student attrition.

(In Orange County, it was decided to use a survey instrument because this method is efficient, relatively inexpensive, and allows for flexibility.)

APPOINT PROJECT FACILITATOR

Appoint a project facilitator to be responsible for the follow-up study and report.

(In Orange County, an occupational placement specialist and a college administrator were project facilitators.)

DEVELOP PLANS

Establish goals and objectives for the study.

Identify target group to follow up.

Identify areas or topics to be included in the survey.

Develop a time line for activities.

Assign individual responsibilities.

Distribute activity schedules.

GATHER AND REVIEW BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Contact the Florida Educators' Information Service (FEIS) to request material on follow-up studies of dropouts.

Write letters to personnel in community colleges and vo-tech centers in Florida requesting pertinent information, surveys, etc. used in those facilities.

Review all available materials on student attrition. (See list of materials and contributing institutions on page 6.)

(NOTE: It is not necessary to repeat this activity if the Orange County survey instrument is adaptable to the needs of the institution or group wishing to conduct a similar study.)

DRAFT SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Using available surveys as models, design questions to meet the objectives of the study.

Review draft for completeness.

Format instrument for data processing. (In Orange County this preparation was done by a consultant.)

DETERMINE METHODOLOGY

Decide on the way in which survey is to be conducted—mail, telephone or personal interview, etc.

(The telephone interview was selected for use in Orange County because it provides the highest rate of response.)

IDENTIFY POPULATION TO BE SURVEYED

Obtain a list of dropouts. Scientifically select a random sample from this list. For each person selected, randomly select two backups.

List names, addresses, and telephone numbers of first selections and backups.

(In Orange County, a sample of 292 dropouts was drawn from a population of 1,260 dropouts: 140 out of 611 from Mid-Florida Technical Institute, and 152 out of 649 from Valencia Community College.)

SCHEDULE TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Establish specific calling dates and times for interviews.

(Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 4:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. were found to be good times to make contacts.)

SELECT INTERVIEWERS

Select interviewers. (These may be community volunteers or staff members.)

(In Orange County, the interviewers were paid.)

TRAIN INTERVIEWERS

Train interviewers by providing exact calling procedures, including specific information on how to handle difficult or uncooperative respondents.

CONDUCT SURVEY

Have ir terviewers make phone calls. (In Orange County, interviewers called first selections on list. If person was not reached, the first backup was called. Finally, if necessary, the second backup was called. The procedure resulted in a 100 percent response rate.)

Enter responses on individual survey forms. Complete respondent data on each form.

PROCESS DATA

Enter respondent data into computer and obtain printout OR process data manually. (In Orange County, data processing was done by a consultant.)

ANALYZE DATA

Tabulate responses for each question.

Analyze data by course.

Analyze results on basis of demographic information and/or specific types of information determined by the objectives.

Interpret data.

Summarize data.

(In Orange County, data was analyzed by a consultant.)

WRITE REPORT

Write report of results. (In Orange County, the report was written by a consultant.)

STUDY REPORT

Distribute survey results to appropriate personnel, including the problem-solving group.

Review data with appropriate personnel.

Determine implications for services and programs.

Outline actions for modification of services and programs.

REMEDY IDENTIFIED DEFICIENCIES

Use follow-up survey results to improve programs in order to reduce the rate of student attrition.

MATERIALS AND CONTRIBUTING INSTITUTIONS

Information about other withdrawal evaluations, follow-up surveys, etc. was used in the development of the survey and Handbook. Information and materials on student attrition studies were requested from all community colleges, vo-tech centers, and district vocational departments in Florida. Some of the institutions and agencies that supplied information are listed below:

Pasco Hernando Community College, Dade City
Florida Keys Community College, Key West
Seminole Community College, Sanford
Valencia Community College, Orlando
Daytona Beach Community College, Daytona Beach
Lee County Vo-Tech Center, Fort Myers
Collier County Vo-Tech Center, Naples
Orange County Public Schools, Orlando
Mid-Florida Technical Institute, Orlando
Lake City Community College, Lake City
Santa Fe Community College, Gainesville
Washington Holmes Area Vo-Tech Center, Chipley
State of Florida Departmetnt of Education, Division of Vocational Education, Tallahassee

Microfiche materials on student attrition studies were received from the Florida Educators' Information Service (FEIS) and other sources. The following materials were among those used in the preparation of the follow-up survey and this Handbook:

Queen, John E., and Rusting, Jean. **Survey of Non-Returning, Non-Vocational Students.** Norwack, California: Cerritos College, Office of Institutional Research, 1977.

Report of Student Terminations from Full-Time Day Programs of the Minnesota Area Vocational-Technical Institutes between July 1, 1972 and June 30, 1973. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minnesota Area Vocational-Technical Institute, 1973.

Gell, Robert L., and others. **A Four-Year Follow-Up of Non-Returning Students at Montgomery College.** Rockville, Maryland: Montgomery College, Office of Institutional Research, 1975.

God, Benk, and Wnsch, Dan. **Follow-up Study of Non-Continuing Students Enrolled in 1975-76 in Secretarial Science, Administration of Justice, or Electronics Curricula.** Research Study No. 77-10. Los Angeles, California: Los Angeles City College, 1977.

Michelin, Michael G. **Student Attrition in the Wisconsin VTAE System—Phase II Final Report.** Wausau, Wisconsin: North Central Technical Institute, 1977.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT_____

1. Interview # _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Phone Number _____

2. School Attended

(0) _____ Mid-Florida
(1) _____ Valencia

3. Sex of Respondent

(0) _____ Female
(1) _____ Male

MID-FLORIDA/VALENCIA
STUDENT FOLLOW-UP SURVEY
March, 1980
Ned S. Hubbell & Associates
Port Huron, Michigan

Interviewer _____

Date of Interview _____

Time of Day of Interview _____A.M. _____P.M.

Time Interview Began _____

Time Interview Ended _____

Length of Interview _____minutes

Posted to Master List by _____

OPENING BY INTERVIEWER: _____

Hello, I'm **(name of interviewer)** . I'm a volunteer, calling for **(name of school or group)** We're doing a follow-up study of former students and your name was one of those randomly selected. I'd like to ask you a few questions about the school. Knowing your opinions will help us do a better job of serving students and former students like yourself. Of course, your opinions will remain strictly confidential.

(SLIGHT PAUSE. DO NOT ASK FOR APPROVAL. PLUNGE RIGHT IN.)

4. First of all, when you attended the school, did you enroll in day or night courses?

(0) _____ Day
(1) _____ Night
(2) _____ Both day and night

5. What was your major/program of study at the school? (SPECIFY)

_____

6. When you attended the school, what was your primary objective? Was it: (READ LIST)

(0) _____ To explore a new career or academic interest?
(1) _____ To prepare for immediate entry into a career?
(2) _____ To prepare for transfer to a four-year institution?
(3) _____ To update skills for a job you held already?
(4) _____ For interest and or self-enrichment? Or
7. (5) _____ For some other reason? (SPECIFY) _____

8. To what extent have you been able to complete this objective? Have you fully completed, partially completed, or not completed your objective?

(0) _____ Fully completed
(1) _____ Partially completed
(2) _____ Not completed

9. May I ask what was the main reason for your leaving school? (DO NOT READ LIST, BUT MARK ANY ANSWERS RESPONDENT GIVES. PROBE: Any other reasons?)

(0) _____ Lack of interest
(1) _____ Major or desired courses not available
(2) _____ Courses too difficult
(3) _____ Transferred to another school
(4) _____ Conflict between job and studies
(5) _____ Found job for which courses already completed were sufficient
(6) _____ Financial reasons
(7) _____ Change in family/marital/child care status
(8) _____ Personal problems
10. (9) _____ Other (SPECIFY)_____

These next questions are about different services of the school. Based on your experiences while you were a student, tell me how satisfied you were with each one. Were you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with . . .(GO TO X'D ITEM, READ DOWN AND GET RESPONSES FOR EACH ITEM.)?

START WITH X'D ITEM		(0) Very Satisfied	(1) Somewhat Satisfied	(2) Somewhat Dissatisfied	(3) Very Dissatisfied	(4) Can't Say
☐ **11.**	Counseling/Guidance services	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **12.**	Personal assessment and goal-setting procedures	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **13.**	Financial aid services	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **14.**	Veteran services	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **15.**	Class scheduling	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **16.**	Course content in your major field of study	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **17.**	Instructors' interest in and accessibility to students	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **18.**	Classroom/Shop instruction in your major field of study	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **19.**	Classroom/Laboratory facilities	0	1	2	3	4
☐ **20.**	Learning resource center/Learning labs/Library services	0	1	2	3	4

21. What kinds of things could the school have done to encourage you to remain in school? (DO NOT READ LIST, BUT MARK ANY ANSWERS RESPONDENT GIVES.) Anything else?

(0) _____ Offer more courses or programs
(1) _____ Offer more counseling services
(2) _____ Provide more information about jobs and careers
22. (3) _____ Other (SPECIFY) _____

23. What is your present educational situation or plan?

(0) _____ Have transferred to another school
(1) _____ Plan to transfer to another school
(2) _____ Plan to return to this school
(3) _____ Have achieved my educational goal without earning a degree or certificate
(4) _____ Have not achieved my educational goal and do not plan to continue my education
(5) _____ Can't say/undecided
24. (6) _____ Other (SPECIFY) _____

_____

25. Have you been employed since you left _____ (name of school) _____?

(0) _____ Yes (GO TO QUESTION #26)
(1) _____ No (GO TO QUESTION #31)

ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ONLY IF RESPONDENT IS EMPLOYED.

26. How does your present job relate to the courses in which you were enrolled at _____ (name of school) _____? Is your present job directly related, indirectly related, or unrelated to the courses?

(0) _____ Directly related
(1) _____ Indirectly related
(2) _____ Unrelated

27. When did you begin working for your present employer? Before enrolling at _____ (name of school) _____, after enrolling, or after leaving?

(0) _____ Before enrolling
(1) _____ After enrolling
(2) _____ After leaving

28. In your opinion, how did the courses you took at _____ (name of school) _____ help in relation to your job? Did the courses help you get the job, perform better on the job, or advance in the job?

(0) _____ Get the job
(1) _____ Perform better on the job
(2) _____ Advance in the job
29. (3) _____ Other (SPECIFY) _____

_____

30. How would you rate the job training you received at _____ (name of school) _____? Would you say training was excellent, adequate, or not adequate in its usefulness to you in your job?

(0) _____ Excellent
(1) _____ Adequate
(2) _____ Not adequate
(3) _____ Can't say

ASK ALL RESPONDENTS

31. Since you left _____ (name of school), have you enrolled in another school?

(0) _____ Yes (GO TO QUESTION #32)
(1) _____ No (GO TO QUESTION #36)

32. What is the name and location of that school?

_____ (name of school) _____ _____ (location) _____

33. Are you currently enrolled there?

(0) _____ Yes
(1) _____ No

34. How does the coursework you are taking or have completed at that school relate to your major/program of further education? Is it very much related, somewhat related, very little related, or not related?

(0) _____ Very much related
(1) _____ Somewhat related
(2) _____ Very little related
(3) _____ Not related
(4) _____ Can't say

35. How would you rate the education you received at _____ (name of school) as preparation for your further education? Was the education here excellent, good, fair, or poor?

(0) _____ Excellent
(1) _____ Good
(2) _____ Fair
(3) _____ Poor
(4) _____ Can't say

These last questions are just to help us classify the opinions of the different people we are talking to.

36. Would you mind telling me the year in which you were born?

(0) _____ Prior to 1924 (56 and over)
(1) _____ 1925 through 1945 (35 to 55)
(2) _____ 1946 through 1954 (26 to 34)
(3) _____ 1955 through 1961 (19 to 25)
(4) _____ 1962 through 1964 (16 to 18)
(5) _____ Declined to answer

37. Are you American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, or white (other than Hispanic)?

(0) _____ American Indian or Alaskan Native
(1) _____ Asian or Pacific Islander
(2) _____ Black/Negro
(3) _____ Hispanic
(4) _____ White (other than Hispanic)
(5) _____ Other race/ethnic group
(6) _____ Declined to answer

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR GIVING US YOUR OPINIONS.

Interviewer's Signature: _____

Interviewer's Comments about This Interview:

_____

_____

_____

15

ORANGE COUNTY STUDENT FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Surveys of postsecondary vocational program noncompleters in 1978 from Mid-Florida Technical Institute and Valencia Community College were conducted during March 1980. Mid-Florida Technical Institute (Orange County Public Schools) offers vocational and technical training to high school students and adults. Valencia Community College (Public Community College System of Florida) offers academic as well as vocational and technical programs.

Except for data processing, analysis, and reporting, which were done with the assistance of consultants, the survey steps were completed by local personnel, mostly staff members of the two institutions.

The survey was conducted by telephone to determine why students drop out. Results will be used to remedy problem areas in an effort to reduce attrition in postsecondary vocational programs. Because course offerings at the two schools differ, the following reports present the results individually by institution. Comparisons between the schools also are shown. Results are presented in percentages throughout.

MID-FLORIDA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE SURVEY RESULTS (140 RESPONDENTS)

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

		Number of Respondents	Percent
Question 3:			
Sex of respondents:	Female	72	51
	Male	68	49
Question 36:			
Ages of respondents:	56 and over	18	13
	35-55	35	25
	26-34	17	12
	19-25	49	35
	16-18	16	11
	Declined to answer	5	3
Question 37:			
Race/ethnic composition of respondents:	American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	1
	Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0
	Black	14	10
	Hispanic	5	4
	White	115	82
	Other	3	2
	Declined to answer	1	1

QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Question 4: Did you attend day or night courses?

Responses: Most of the respondents attended only day courses 91%; attended both day and night courses 7%; attended night courses only 1%.

Question 5: Specify your major/program of study.

Responses: Respondents mentioned 20 different majors/programs of study: business education 22%; automotive mechanics/auto body repair 14%; clothing production and services 14%; GED preparation 11%. The remaining 39% was made up of programs each having fewer than 10% of the respondents.

Questions 6 and 7: What was your primary objective?

Responses: The primary objectives for attending Mid-Florida were: to explore a new career 34%; to prepare for immediate entry into a career 26%; for interest/self-enrichment 21%; to update skills for a job already held 15%; to prepare for GED 11%; to prepare for transfer to a four-year institution 2%. Other reasons totaled 11%. (Some respondents mentioned more than one objective.)

ATTITUDINAL QUESTIONS, RESPONSES, AND COMMENTS

Question 8: To what extent have you been able to complete your objective?

Responses: Fully completed 25%; partially completed 46%; not completed 29%.

Comments: Although the respondents were dropouts, 71% felt they had fully or partially achieved their objective.

Questions 9 and 10: What was the main reason for your leaving school?

Responses: The four main reasons were: personal problems 19%; financial reasons 14%; learned what was needed 11%; found a job 10%. Fourteen other factors each received less than 10%.

Comments: Dissatisfaction with courses and/or instructors was mentioned by only 6%.

Question 11: How satisfied were you with counseling/guidance services?

Responses: Very satisfied 36%; somewhat satisfied 21%; somewhat dissatisfied 3%; very dissatisfied 4%; can't say 36%.

Comments: If the "can't say" responses indicate a lack of knowledge of guidance service, this might indicate a problem area. Of those in the GED program, 93% were very or somewhat satisified. Counseling and guidance might be more available and structured in the GED program.

Question 12: How satisfied were you with personal assessment and goal-setting procedures?

Responses: Very satisfied 34%; somewhat satisfied 34%; somewhat dissatisfied 10%; very dissatisfied 3%; can't say 19%.

Comments: Goal setting may be related to counseling/guidance and the 19% "can't say" response might reflect a lack of knowledge in the area. Although the GED program respondents were well satisfied with counseling/guidance services, they were dissatisfied with personal assessment and goal-setting procedures (32% either somewhat or very dissatisfied). Perhaps this reflects a dissatisfaction with themselves in relation to their progress in school.

Question 13: How satisfied were you with financial aid services?

Responses: Very satisfied 11%; somewhat satisfied 4%; somewhat dissatisfied 1%; very dissatisfied 1%; can't say 82%.

Comments: Apparently the dropouts were not aware of financial aid services or they had little involvement with them. Results were consistent across courses.

Question 14: How satisfied were you with veteran services?

Responses: Very satisfied 9%; somewhat satisfied 8%; somewhat dissatisfied 1%; very dissatisfied 1%; can't say 78%.

Comments: The percentage of "can't say" responses was much lower for those in auto mechanics (58%).

Question 15: How satisfied were you with class scheduling?

Responses: Very satisfied 66%; somewhat satisfied 26%; somewhat dissatisfied 6%; very dissatisfied 1%; can't say 1%.

Comments: Among courses with the greatest number of respondents, clothing production students showed the highest positive reaction (very satisfied 90%, somewhat satisfied 10%).

Question 16: How satisfied were you with course content in your major field of study?

Responses: Very satisfied 62%; somewhat satisfied 25%; somewhat dissatisfied 4%; very dissatisfied 4%; can't say 4%.

Comments: Of the courses having 10% or more of the respondents, clothing production had the highest positive responses with 85% very satisfied. Business education was most negative with 16% either somewhat or very dissatisfied. This is a key question; the results deserve close scrutiny.

Question 17: How satisfied were you with instructors' interest in and accessibility to students?

Responses: Very satisfied 59%; somewhat satisfied 21%; somewhat dissatisfied 12%; very dissatisfied 7%; can't say 1%.

Comments: Nearly one-fifth of the respondents were somewhat or very dissatisfied. Dissatisfaction was highest among respondents in business education courses (26% either somewhat or very dissatisfied). This is a key question; the results deserve close scrutiny.

Question 18: How satisfied were you with classroom/shop instruction in your major field of study?

Responses: Very satisfied 59%; somewhat satisfied 26%; somewhat dissatisfied 7%; very dissatisfied 7%; can't say 1%.

Comments: Satisfaction was greatest with auto mechanics (100% very or somewhat satisfied).

Question 19: How satisfied were you with classroom/laboratory facilities?

Responses: very satisfied 66%; somewhat satisfied 21%; somewhat dissatisfied 4%; very dissatisfied 1%; can't say 6%.

Comments: Although auto mechanics respondents were satisfied with instruction, 16% were somewhat dissatisfied with facilities.

Question 20: How satisfied were you with the learning resource center/learning labs/library services?

Reponses: Very satisfied 37%; somewhat satisfied 13%; somewhat dissatisfied 4%; can't say 46%.

Comments: Nearly half of the respondents either were not knowledgeable about resourses or were not involved enough to say anything about them.

Questions 21 and 22: What kinds of things could this school have done to encourage you to remain in school?

Responses: Nothing 44%; not fault of school 9%; offer more courses 6%; offer more counseling services 6%; provide more information about jobs and careers 6%; provide better instructors 7%. Six other responses each accounted for less than 5%.

Comments: Responses on this item generally do not provide much insight into why students drop out.

Questions 23 and 24: What is your present educational situation or plan?

Responses: Can't say 27%; plan to return to this school 24%; none 11%; have transferred to another school 9%. Ten other plans made up the remaining 29%.

Comments: About one-fourth of the respondents plan to return to Mid-Florida Technical Institute.

Questions 25-30: Have you been employed since you left our school?

Responses: Yes 69%; No 31%.

Comments (on questions 26-30 for those who responded "yes" to Question 25): Present job relates directly or indirectly to courses 28%. Eighty-nine percent of the auto mechanics students and 82% of GED respondents were employed. (As might be expected, no GED respondents indicated a direct relationship.) Started work before enrolling in school 25%; after enrollment 17%; after leaving 58%. Courses help perform on present jobs 22%; courses helped get the job 14%; courses helped personally 11%. When asked how the job training received at the school rated, responses were: excellent 29%; adequate 51%; not adequate 14%; can't say 6%.

Questions 31-34: Since you left this school have you enrolled at another school?

Responses: Yes 26%; No 73%.

Comments (on questions 32-34 for those who responded "yes" to Question 31): Sixty-seven percent are currently enrolled at other institutions as follows: community colleges 36%; high schools 27%; vo-tech centers 24%; four-year colleges 6%; and other schools 6%. Sixty percent indicated that the courses they are taking or have completed were very much or somewhat related to their program of future education.

Question 35: How would you rate the education you received at our school as preparation for your future education?

Responses: Excellent 34%; good 45%; fair 12%; poor 5%; can't say 5%.

Comments: About 80% of the respondents who had enrolled in another school felt that their education at Mid-Florida Technical Institute had prepared them well for further study.

MID-FLORIDA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

Many of the reasons that students dropped out of courses or programs at Mid-Florida Technical Institute were personal rather than institutional. Generally, respondents were satisfied with programs, services, and facilities at Mid-Florida. Institutional factors represented only a small proportion (13%) of the reasons respondents gave for leaving school. In light of these results, the 63% dropout rate of students from post-secondary vocational programs in Orange County in 1978 can be seen in a different perspective. It seems reasonable to conclude that many factors related to why students fail to complete courses may be beyond the control of the institution. However, there are some actions that can be initiated by the institution to reduce student attrition. Many of the dropouts apparently were not aware of some services offered at Mid-Florida. There was some dissatisfaction in the areas of personal assessment and goal setting, and some students felt the instructors could have been more interested in and accessible to students. Only about one-fourth of the dropouts who were working said that their present job related to the courses they had taken, and fewer than one-fourth said their courses helped them perform in their present jobs.

Results of the survey indicated that certain actions might be taken to reduce student attrition at Mid-Florida Technical Institute.

1. Set-up an orientation program for students to provide information about the various programs and services offered by the institution.
2. Offer greater assistance to students in personal skill assessment and goal setting, especially as these relate to job opportunities.
3. Offer greater assistance to students in working out personal and financial problems.
4. Plan in-service training for instructors that stresses the importance of being accessible to and interested in the students.
5. Plan in-service training for instructors that provides opportunities for them to learn the skills required to meet the needs of the students more effectively.

VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY RESULTS
(152 RESPONDENTS)

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

		Number of Respondents	Percent
Question 3:			
Sex of respondents:	Female	86	57
	Male	66	43
Question 36:			
Ages of respondents:	56 and over	5	3
	35-55	38	25
	26-34	34	22
	19-25	74	49
	16-18	1	1
	Declined to answer	0	0
Question 37:			
Race/ethnic composition of respondents:	American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	0
	Asian/Pacific Islander	1	1
	Black	26	17
	Hispanic	5	3
	White	119	78
	Other	1	1
	Declined to answer	0	0

QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Question 4: Did you attend day or night courses?

Responses: Attended night courses 43%; attended day courses 34%; attended both day and night courses 22%.

Question 5: Specify your major/program of study.

Responses: Respondents mentioned 21 different majors/programs of study, including electronics technology 24%; medical lab technician 13%; fire technology 10%; architectural building technician 9%. The remaining 44% was made up of programs each having fewer than 9% of the respondents.

Questions 6 and 7: What was your primary objective?

Responses: The primary objectives for attending Valencia were: to prepare for immediate entry into a career 34%; to update skills for a job 31%; to explore a new career 21%; to prepare for transfer to a four-year institution 14%; for interest/self-enrichment 9%. Other reasons totaled 5%. (Some respondents mentioned more than one objective.)

ATTITUDINAL QUESTIONS, RESPONSES, AND COMMENTS

Question 8: To what extent have you been able to complete your objective?

Responses: Fully completed 11%; partially completed 57%; not completed 32%.

Comments: Although the respondents were dropouts, 68% felt they had fully or partially achieved their objective.

Questions 9 and 10: What was the main reason for your leaving school?

Responses: The three main reasons were: conflicts between job and studies 32%; financial reasons 15%; change in family/ marital/child care status 10%. Fourteen other factors each received less than 10%.

Comments: Dissatisfaction with courses, curriculum, or counseling was mentioned by only 8%.

Question 11: How satisfied were you with counseling/guidance services?

Responses: Very satisfied 33%; somewhat satisfied 16%; somewhat dissatisfied 5%; very dissatisfied 3%; can't say 41%.

Comments: If the "can't say" responses indicate a lack of knowledge or involvement with guidance service, this might indicate a problem area.

Question 12: How satisfied were you with personal assessment and goal-setting procedures?

Responses: Very satisfied 14%; somewhat satisfied 13%; somewhat dissatisfied 2%; very dissatisfied 0%; can't say 70%.

Comments: Goal setting may be related to counseling/guidance and the 70% "can't say" response might reflect a lack of knowledge or involvement in these areas.

Question 13: How satisfied were you with financial aid services?

Responses: Very satisfied 18%; somewhat satisfied 3%; somewhat dissatisfied 0%; very dissatisfied 2%; can't say 76%.

Comments: Apparently the dropouts were not aware of financial aid services or they had little involvement with them. This was consistent across courses.

Question 14: How satisfied were you with veteran services?

Responses: Very satisfied 13%; somewhat satisfied 5%; somewhat dissatisfied 1%; very dissatisfied 1%; can't say 80%.

Comments: The "can't say" responses indicate a lack of knowledge or involvement with veteran services.

Question 15: How satisfied were you with class scheduling?

Responses: Very satisfied 66%; somewhat satisfied 20%; somewhat dissatisfied 9%; very dissatisfied 2%; can't say 1%.

Comments: Among courses with the greatest number of respondents, satisfaction was greater than with the overall respondent percentages.

Question 16: How satisfied were you with course content in your major field of study?

Responses: Very satisfied 59%; somewhat satisfied 29%; somewhat dissctisfied 7%; very dissatisfied 1%; can't say 3%.

Comments: Of the courses having 10% or more of the respondents, medical technology had the highest positive responses with 95% indicating either very or somewhat satisfied. Fire technology responcients were most negative with 27% indicating somewhat dissatisfied. Respiratory therapy with 9% of the respondents showed 100% of the ratings as either very or somewhat satisfied. This is a key question; the results should be closely scrutinized.

Question 17: How satisfied were you with instructors' interest in and accessibility to students?

Responses: Very satisfied 70%; somewhat satisfied 21%; somewhat dissatisfied 5%; very dissatisfied 1%; can't say 1%.

Comments: These results indicate a very positive attitude toward the instructors' interest in and accessibility to students.

Question 18: How satisfied were you with classroom/shop instruction in your major field of study?

Responses: Very satisfied 62%; somewhat satisfied 29%; somewhat dissatisfied 5%; very dissatisfied 1%; can't say 3%.

Comments: Satisfaction was generally consistent across courses.

Question 19: How satisfied were you with classroom/laboratory facilities?

Responses: Very satisfied 64%; somewhat satisfied 24%; somewhat dissatisfied 5%; very dissatisfied 0%; can't say 7%.

Comments: Satisfaction was generally consistent across courses.

Question 20: How satisfied were you with the learning resource center/learning labs/library services?

Responses: Very satisfied 53%; somewhat satisfied 13%; very dissatisfied 0%; can't say 30%.

Comments: Nearly one-third of the respondents either were not knowledgeable about resourses or were not involved enough to decide.

Questions 21 and 22: What kinds of things could this school have done to encourage you to remain in school?

Responses: Nothing 62%; not fault of school 11%; offer more courses 8%; offer classes at different times or locations 8%. Other responses accounted for less than 5%.

Comments: Responses on this item generally do not provide much insight into why students drop out.

Questions 23 and 24: What is your present educational situation or plan?

Responses: Plan to return to this school 54%; can't say 15%. Fifteen other plans were mentioned, each receiving less than 7% of the responses.

Comments: Over half of the respondents plan to return to Valencia Community College.

Questions 25-30: Have you been employed since you left our school?

Responses: Yes 90%; No 9%.

Comments (on questions 26-30 for those who responded "yes" to Question 25): Present job related directly or indirectly to courses 62%; started work before enrolling in school 49%; started working after enrolling 22%; started job after leaving school 89%. Courses helped perform on present job 40%; courses helped get the job 16%. When asked how they rated job training received at school, responses were: excellent 31%; adequate 42%; not adequate 4%; can't say 23%.

Questions 31-34: Since you left this school have you enrolled at another school?

Responses: Yes 17%; No 83%.

Comments (on questions 32-34 for those who responded "yes" to Question 31): Sixty-six percent are currently enrolled at other institutions as follows: four-year colleges or universities 52%; vo-tech centers 24%; community colleges 14%; other schools 6%.

Question 35: How would you rate the education you received at our school as preparation for your future education?

Responses: Excellent 19%; good 58%; fair 14%; poor 0%; can't say 9%.

Comments: About 80% of the respondents felt that the education at Valencia Community College prepared them well for further study.

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VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

Many of the reasons why students dropped out of courses or programs at Valencia Community College were personal rather than institutional. Generally, respondents were satisfied with course content and instruction and had left school for personal or financial reasons. However, a very high percentage of the dropouts were uninformed about personal assessment and goal-setting procedures, counseling and guidance, financial aid, and veteran services. Results of the survey indicated that certain actions might be taken to reduce student attrition at Valencia Community College.

1. Assist in working out school and job conflicts and financial and personal problems.
2. Plan an orientation program for students to provide information about financial and other services offered by the institution.
3. Assist students in the areas of personal assessment and goal-setting procedures.
4. Inform students of the availability of counseling and guidance services.

COMPARISON OF SURVEYS OF MID-FLORIDA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AND VALENCIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Although there are differences between the student populations of the two schools surveyed, reasons for student attrition are similar. For the most part, these reasons are personal and financial rather than classroom- or institution-related. Respondents from both schools seem to have a need for greater understanding of personal assessment and goal-setting procedures. The need to tie personal assessment and goal-setting procedures with job skills and opportunities may be greater at Mid-Florida. Helping students resolve conflicts between school and work seems to be the greatest need at Valencia.

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